

Voicing Relations in the Self, Tulasi and Other in Spiritual Vedic Hymns: Insights from Linguistics and Vedic Vaishnavism

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ABSTRACT

The current exploratory study examines the notion of voice in relation to Tulasi, a herb widely known for its medicinal value but that features as the object of feminine divine worship in Gaudiya Vaishnavism, a sect of Hinduism. Written scripture in the form of commonly used hymns retold in English from the Sanskrit and Bengali in the worship of Tulasi is used as the data. The identification of pronouns and the application of a thematic qualitative content analysis together with the Bakhtinian idea of heteroglossia reveal intersections of voicing relations in singular and multiple relations in three main relationships concerning the Self, Tulasi and Other that correspond to eight voicing categories namely, Veneration, Yearning, Self-Abnegation, Conceding, Forbearance, Injunction, Exegesis and Glorification. Findings from the voicing categories are given a systemic functional linguistic (SFL) interpretation combined with insights from Vedic Vaishnavism theological underpinnings to further enrich the discussion. The study is of significance to linguists and anyone with a theological and philosophical interest in spiritual Vedic texts.

Keywords: Bakhtinian, Pronouns, Self, Systemic functional linguistics, Thematic qualitative content, Tulasi, Vedic, Veneration, Voicing.

Introduction

Gaudiya Vaishnavism is a sect of Hinduism that brings together many aspects of worship including the veneration of sacred trees, of which the Tulasi plant is considered the most sacred. With roots in Bengal, India, Gaudiya Vaishnavism worships as Supreme Lord the deity Lord Krishna, whose name is often times spelt 'Krsna' and who is also known by other names such as Keshava (Rosen, 2006, p. 183), Madhava (Rosen, 2006, p. 62) and Govinda (Rosen, 2006, p. 161). The sect flourished in the 16th century with the advent of Lord Caitanya, a sage who propounded the congregational chanting of the holy names of a "monotheistic" God (Rosen, 2006, p. 25). In the 20th century, this Vedic teaching was spread to the West and other parts of the world by the Vedic scholar and practitioner, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and his disciples (Goswami & Schweig, 2012).

Data for the current study comprise a set of five commonly used hymns retold in English from the Sanskrit and Bengali in the worship of Tulasi found in Dasa (1999; 2014) and Swami (2020). Since the goddess Tulasi is the embodiment of truth and it is she who sets the stage for "Lord Krishna's *lilas* or pleasure pastimes," (Rosen, 2002, p. 60) her worship is held to be extremely significant in cultivating Krishna *bhakti* (devotion) for followers of this tradition.

While interest in the plant Tulasi has especially been in relation to its antimicrobial, therapeutic and ecological benefits, to date, despite the rich textual data related to Tulasi worship that is available in the form of hymns, there has not been an attempt to provide any linguistic analyses of English translations of the songs and narratives originally written in Sanskrit and Bengali. The current paper aligns with Jain and Kapoor's (2007) view that

more exploration is needed of both scripture and current traditions and beliefs of the divinisation of indigenous plant species and their relationship with Hindu gods and goddesses. The role of language in social functions and exchange, in this case of hymns recited in congregational worship, is especially relevant (Flick, 2009).

One of the discourse linguistic theoretical frameworks that has made a leading original scholarly contribution to the study of language is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Halliday in the 1960s, which studies language “as a semiotic system” (Halliday, 1978, p. 61) and “as a resource for making meaning” (Martin, 2016, p. 36). Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 2) in their pioneering work on cohesion in English affirmed that “a text is not just a big sentence but rather ‘a SEMANTIC unit: a unit . . . of meaning . . . REALIZED by sentences.’” Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 3) defined text as “any instance of language, in any medium, that makes sense to someone who knows the language” or “language functioning in context”. In the current study, hymns are the text that worshippers “engage with and interpret”, hence they may be characterised as “language functioning in context”, and since language is “a resource for making meaning”, a text is “a process of making meaning in context” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 3).

In Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014, p. 32) theory of meta-function, pronouns are one of the grammatical resources used to realise interpersonal meanings. Recent studies on pronouns and interpersonal meanings from an SFL perspective come from a variety of genres: Wahyuningsih’s work (2018) on Donald Trump’s and Nur’s (2015) on Nelson Mandela’s presidential inauguration speeches; Uckaradejdumrong’s (2016) study of standard Thai deictic reference; Wang and Zhang’s (2019, p. 775) study on traditional hymns and contemporary Christian songs in China and Liping’s (2017) study comparing translated English versions of *Song Ci Jiang Cheng Zi. Ji Meng*, a Song Dynasty poem in the tradition of Ci poetry. Of closer relevance to the current study is Liping’s (2017) work using SFL to compare the use of pronouns in original Chinese poems with their English translations to determine the narrator, the subjects of narration and reader involvement in the discourse.

Concern for a close study of religious language is attested by Samarin (1987, p. 86), who noted that “religion is another domain of human behaviour where language is an important component”. Recent studies using SFL in religious discourse are: Krisnayanthi and Susanto’s (2019) study showing the importance of SFL semiotics to analyse the structure, meaning and social function of the myth

of prayer etiquette at a temple in Catur Kintamani; Noor et al.’s (2015) SFL mood analysis of the last address of the Holy Prophet (PBUH); Mheta et al.’s (2017) interpersonal and textual meta-functional analysis of Shona personal names of spiritual significance in Zimbabwean indigenous culture and; Bonnin’s (2009) study of Catholic texts proposing reconciliation of the historical relationship between religious and political discourse in Argentina using Halliday’s metaphors of mood and transitivity.

A survey of studies on Hindu religious texts will show that there are many such studies. One example of a study on Hindu religious texts in Sanskrit is by Gayathri and Meenakshi (2015) on whether emotional intelligence is universal or culture specific in relation to selected Sanskrit verses of the Hindu sacred text, the Bhagavad Gita. No doubt English translations of sacred Hindu texts written in Sanskrit abound today, beginning with the work of Max Muller compared with a hundred years ago (Coburn, 1984), but interest in a linguistic study of such texts, more so of works translated into English, is lacking. This study calls for a close linguistic examination of a “particular document in a particular tradition” (Coburn, 1984, p. 436), that is, it is a linguistic examination of the English translation of Tulasi hymns in the Gaudiya Vaishnavism spiritual culture. Research into linguistics and translated Vedic texts most closely related to the current study are Srinivass’s (2014) study on divinity in the genre of retold Mahabharata stories in English for children and Rajandran’s (2017) study on the metaphorical uses of the concept of enlightenment in an English translation of the Bhagavad Gita. Srinivass’s (2014) study on the generic structures of the Mahabharata narrative in English and how language is used to express divine, religious and cultural meanings using Halliday’s systemic functional transitivity is the point of interest for the current study.

Method

The Notion of Voice and Bakhtin

The notion of voice is defined and studied from different perspectives. From a purely SFL (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and appraisal (Martin & White, 2005) perspective, Coffin’s (2009) work on academic writing defined voice in a dialogic perspective in relation to the linguistic options for referencing academic sources in a thesis on film studies following Halliday’s SFL and Appraisal Perspective as well as Martin and White’s (2005) perspective.

One of the most notable scholars who defined the notion of voices, Mikhail Bakhtin, was a renowned “Russian

philosopher, literary critic, semiotician, and scholar” whose work made a significant impact on disciplines such as “linguistic philosophy, literary theory, philosophy of language, and humanities methodology” (Zou, 2018, p. 368). Bakhtin’s conceptualisation of the notion of voices has been extensively analysed and discussed and still remains a popular discursive framework among researchers, students and academics. One early study using this framework is Hohne and Wussow’s (1994, p. 9) feminist literary work in which “voices” was understood as “the intentions of individual speakers present in each utterance”. It noted that in “the heteroglossia of dialogism, each voice, whatever its gender(s), will contain the voices of others” and “the incorporation and interweaving of various voices” is “to create a sum far greater and more generative than the parts”. Hohne and Wussow’s work further highlighted that “a dialogic is formed by the different meanings within and between utterances” (p. 10).

In quite recent times, Barwell (2015, p. 5) explained the Bakhtinian philosophy of voices as “the intentions of individual speakers present in each utterance,” which is “a relational approach, in which meaning is situated and related to preceding utterances, to alternative ways of speaking and to the person towards whom an utterance is directed”. Barwell said that for Bakhtin, “relationality is always towards difference or otherness, which Bakhtin often calls the ‘alien word’”.

Commenting on the concept of relationality, Barwell (2015, p. 6) further said that “the nature of this relationality in Bakhtin’s work is dialogue” and that “dialogue in Bakhtin’s work is a theoretical idea that defines the nature of many aspects of the relationality of language”. Hymns, considered as “spoken monologic” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 3), may then, from the above point of view, be understood to be dialogic too, and in the Bakhtinian sense, they do display many aspects of the relationality of language (Barwell, 2015, p. 6).

Zou’s (2018) work is helpful for its inspiring comparison and compatibility study of Bakhtin’s speech genre, heteroglossia and metalinguistics and Halliday’s register, appraisal theory and meta-functions. Zou (2018, p. 367) explained that Bakhtin’s heteroglossia was labelled by Kristeva (1981) as “intertextuality”. It was defined as “a mechanism to connect both ourselves and social text with which we write ourselves into” while considering “the social factors shaping us” (Zou, 2018, p. 367).

Zou reported that Kristeva’s reframed word ‘intertextuality’ for heteroglossia reverberates with Bakhtin’s

notion that each word carries “a context as well as other contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293 in Zou, 2018, p. 368). Zou (2018, p.369) consolidated her comparison with the view that “the voices-saturated dialogical work serves to recognize the multiplicity of perspectives and voices and represents the reality of language-use”. She added that “the dialogism is idiosyncratic in having a combative quality” (Zou, 2018, p.369) because of the “intense [dialogic] relationship” (Zou, 2018, p.367) that tends to arise between the speaker, who makes the utterance, and the listener, whose response is being anticipated.

Besides a theoretical exposition of the close relationship between Bakhtin and Halliday, a number of cross-sectional studies confirm the idea. Martin and White’s appraisal theory, a branch of SFL theory, is consonant with the Bakhtinian/Voloshinovian notion of dialogism with regard to “the authorial voice” and “the diversity of other voices and alternative viewpoints that always apply in any communicative event” where meanings “orienting the speaker/writer either to what has been said previously on the same subject (or is presented as likely to have been said) or to what is likely to be said in response to the current proposition” is taken into account (White, 2015, p.5). Also of relevance are Pietikäinen and Dufva’s (2006) use of Bakhtinian dialogical philosophy and critical discourse analysis (CDA) in their analysis of the ethnic identity of a Sami journalist. Another study of interest is Keane’s analysis of Jane Hill’s “Voices of Don Gabriel”, in which the concept of voices connects intersubjectivity, interaction and the “historical specificity of moral communities” (Keane, 2011, p. 166).

Many scholars have critically reflected on the relationship between the speaking subject and its role in discourse. Steinby and Klapuri (2013, p. xiii) interpreted Bakhtin’s notions of (inter) subjectivity, chronotope and dialogism as the “‘sociological’, conception of language” where “speakers use discourse types that are socially and ideologically determined”. They explained that ‘heteroglossia’ refers to the plurality of socially determined discourses, and ‘dialogism’ to the “encountering or mixing of these discourses in speech,” emphasising “the active role played by the individual speaker” (2013, p. xiii). They argued that previous studies of discourse limited “the speaking subject to a position assigned to him by the linguistic system” and did not deal with “the subject in a speech situation” (2013, p. xiii). Hence they describe ‘intersubjectivity’ to mean the speaker has to “not only [make] choices from among a vast number of socially relevant modes of discourse, but also [respond] individually

to the specific content and circumstances of his or her interlocutor's message" (2013, p. xiii).

A similar argument is expressed by Bandlamudi (2013), who examined the dialogic potential in the culture and thought of India in the canonical, non-canonical and contemporary traditions, and argued that classical Indian philosophy being inherently dialogic has been dominated by monologic impulses. Bandlamudi asserted that a study of dialogue and diversity is significant for the study of literary and cultural texts in the convergence of both Indian and non-Indian cultures.

Raggatt's (2006, p. 15) study on multiplicity and conflict in the dialogical Self asserted that a "life story could never be encompassed by a monologue" and that "the life story is really more like a conversation of narrators". Raggatt went on to suggest an examination of "the synchronic, and not just the diachronic" aspects of "narrative identity" (p. 15).

The aforementioned discussion shows there is enough justification for research into the current data, which are Tulasi hymns. The hymn is an apt text for study because of its dialogic potential. Taking into consideration the nature of the data to be examined, in this case Tulasi hymns, and foreseeing the limitations of using one approach for the explication of voicing relations, the current study proposes an empirical study using an analytical framework that most usefully explicates the various voicing relations in the discourse of Tulasi hymns.

The current study is an analysis of voices in a dialogue between the Self and the object of worship, a plant named Tulasi, following the Bakhtinian notion of dialogue, which is the relation between Self and Other, where 'Other' implies person, plant, animal, object or idea (Hynes, 2014, p. 73). The tradition of data for the study is a set of five commonly used hymns retold in English from the Sanskrit and Bengali. The hymns are to do with Tulasi worship in the spiritual culture of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, a sect of Hinduism.

In the current study, the Tulasi hymns are taken to be the Bakhtinian dialogues analysed for voicing relations,

whose relations are first identified by pronoun usage. These voicing relations are conceptualised into voicing categories following a thematic qualitative content analysis. An analysis of how these voicing relations can be related to the notion of voices and Bakhtin's heteroglossia is also attempted. The various voicing categories are interpreted from an SFL perspective complemented by the theological underpinnings of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

Data description

The study limits itself to five sets of standard Sanskrit/Bengali hymns or incantations or *mantras* retold in English for Tulasi worship in Gaudiya Vaishnavism, particularly associated with ISKCON (The International Society for Krishna Consciousness). For the purpose of the current study the term 'hymn' will be used. Although generally, many different kinds of hymn are used for the worship of Tulasi, these five sets are used for the current study and form the "language data" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 9) because they are used daily and are easily available in prayer books (e.g. Swami, 2020; Dasa, 1999, 2014) used in all ISKCON temples throughout the world and in websites devoted to the Gaudiya Vaishnavism tradition of worship. The literature related to Tulasi worship is vast, hence, narratives and other literature on Tulasi are outside the scope of the current study.

An illustration of the use of Sanskrit/Bengali transliteration, word/phrase-for-word/phrase meanings and English translations initiated by the work of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (2006) in the ISKCON tradition is provided in Figure 1.

The unit of analysis is the third line, which is the English retold sentence in the example above. There are daily specific ritual procedures in Gaudiya Vaishnavism worship since central to this tradition is "image worship", which is ingrained "in the dynamic relationship between the *bhakta* or devotee" and the object of worship (Valpey, 2018, p. 105–106). While hymns 1, 2 and 3 are recited and sung twice a day, once at dawn and once more at dusk, hymns 4 and 5 have other specific uses as described in Table 1.

1.	<i>mor</i>	<i>ei</i>	<i>abhilash</i>	<i>bilas kunje</i>	<i>dio</i>	<i>vas</i>
2.	(my)	(this)	(desire)	(in the pleasure-groves)	(please give)	(a residence)
3.	My desire is that you will also grant me a residence in the pleasure groves of Sri Vrindavana-dhama. [STK2/3a]					

Figure 1: Illustration of Sanskrit/Bengali transliteration of a line of the hymn

Table 1: Description of Data for the Study: Name of the Hymn and Its Use in Prayer

Hymn 1	Sri Tulasi Pranama mantra	Sri Tulasi Pranama mantra is the first hymn and it is recited twice in Tulasi worship. It is an invocation mantra for the all-important <i>arati</i> (n.d.) (Hindu ritual worship) ceremony, recited before and after the <i>arati</i> , three times in each recital while bowing down before Tulasi.
Hymns 2	Sri Tulasi Kirtana mantra	After Sri Tulasi Pranama mantra is recited, Sri Tulasi Kirtana mantra is sung simultaneously as the <i>arati</i> is being performed.
Hymns 3	Sri Tulasi Pradakshina mantra	Sri Tulasi Pradakshina mantra is sung as the circumambulation of Tulasi is carried out.
Hymns 4	Sri Vrnda Astakam mantra	Sri Vrnda Astakam mantra is sung during a festival known as <i>Tulasi Shaligram Vivaha</i> , where a marriage ceremony between the Tulasi plant and Lord Krishna is conducted.
Hymns 5	Sri Tulasi Cayana mantra	Sri Tulasi Cayana mantra is recited as Tulasi leaves are plucked and collected when an offering is made to Lord Krishna.

Halliday’s idea of context was first conceived in Halliday et al. (1964) as field, mode and style, with field referring to “what is going on”, mode to “the part language plays in this activity” and style to “the relations among the participants” (Martin, 2016, p. 48). Below, the field, tenor and mode (previously, ‘style’) of the hymns used for the current study are established for “text type” and “interpreted as registers” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 29):

Field: An institutionalised system of beliefs, in this case, Gaudiya Vaishnavism, following the teachings of Lord Caitanya, a 16th century saint from West Bengal, popularised and propagated to a Western audience committed to the worship of Krishna

Tenor: Institutionalised ceremony of *arati* (Hindu ritual worship), where the worshipper is either worshipping in solitude, at home in the company of family members or in a congregation in a temple

Mode: Written to be sung out aloud; the English translations are to be recited aloud or in private

Research Questions of the Study

Typically, as in the traditions of qualitative research, the research questions below were continually “re-evaluated” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012, p. 23) during data analysis and data interpretation in order that the voicing relations and voicing categories could become saturated:

1. How are voicing relations to be identified?
2. What are the types of voicing relation?
3. How are voicing relations conceptualised?
4. How can voicing relations be related to the notion of voices and heteroglossia from a Bakhtinian philosophy?
5. What descriptions and interpretations can be offered from an SFL perspective supplemented with theological insights?

Analytical Framework

The English retold lines were turned into transcripts and then used as the textual data. These hymns, called the raw text for qualitative analysis purposes, were prepared for analysis by having them digitalised or transcribed using a simple transcription convention and then enumerated (or annotated) for ease of reference as follows:

I offer my repeated obeisances unto Vrnda, Srimati Tulasi Devi, who is very dear to Lord Kesava. [STP1/1]

where the code STP1/1 refers to clause 1 of the Sri Tulasi Pranama mantra (hymn or incantation). Every sentence in each hymn was given a code for ease of reference.

Answers to the research questions were sought in two phases as shown in the Table 2.

Phase 1, Research Question 1: How are voicing relations to be identified?

Voicing relations are identified in the data by an analysis of pronoun use where pronouns are modelled as voices. As in the traditions of systemic functional linguistics, where analysis is concerned with “language in its entirety” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 20), in the current study, whole hymns rather than randomly chosen excerpts were examined.

Table 2: Research Questions by Phase

Phase 1:	1. How are voicing relations to be identified? 2. What are the types of voicing relation? 3. How are voicing relations conceptualised? 4. How can voicing relations be related to the notion of voices and heteroglossia based on a Bakhtinian framework?
Phase 2:	5. What descriptions and interpretations can be offered from a linguistic perspective supplemented with Vedic Vaishnavism theological insights?

Since the clauses in the hymns were not intricate, it was helpful to identify pronouns from commonly found descriptions as follows (<https://www.dictionary.com/e/what-are-the-types-of-pronouns/>):

- Personal pronouns: I, me, we, and us in subjective and objective position in the clause
- Possessive pronouns: my, you, our to indicate possession of something
- Reflexive pronouns: myself, himself, themselves and herself
- Reciprocal pronouns: each other (for groups of two) and one another (for larger groups)
- Relative pronouns: who, that and which start a clause
- Demonstrative pronouns: these (singular) and those (plural) with a pointing function
- Interrogative pronouns: who, whom and whose (for questions that involve people), and which and what (for questions that involve things)
- Indefinite pronouns: some, anyone and everything with no specific person or thing to reference

To reiterate, the criteria for ascribing a voicing relation is the presence and use of pronouns from the list shown above.

Phase 1, Research Question 2: What are the types of voicing relation?

Answers to Research Question 2 were guided by Cho and Lee's (2014, p. 6) proposal of finding "common patterns in the data by using a consistent set of codes to organise text with similar content". It was found useful to follow the initial procedures of "a grounded theory" (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 4) research as the research started with no preconceived notions of voicing relations in Tulasi worship. Hence, voicing relations were analysed for deictic or non-deictic (non-pointing) uses, meaning that they were grouped under 'interacting with addressee' and 'non-interacting with addressee'. The analysis identified several types of voicing relation. Voicing relations were also grouped into types of voicing relation depending on who was the focus: the Self, Tulasi or the Other.

Phase 1, Research Question 3: How are voicing relations conceptualised?

Answers to Research Question 3 involved the conceptualisation of voicing relations into voicing categories based on "repetitive patterns of action and consistencies" and "patterns of similarity" in the use of pronouns in the data (Saldana, 2013, p. 5). The analysis followed thematic

"qualitative content analysis" (Flick, 2006, p. 312) and "grounded theory-like procedures" following Strauss and Glasser's (1997) "inductive" approach and taking into account that pre-existing information regarding voicing relations in Tulasi were unknown (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 4).

The only preamble of the study is that there are a multitude of voices inscribed in these hymns for Tulasi worship. Following the traditions of qualitative content analysis, data analysis involved "a systematic coding process" that entailed "coding, finding categories and themes" and focussed on "selected aspects of data". Analysis was restricted to those aspects of the data that answered the research questions (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 7).

Cho and Lee's (2014, p. 11) framework of analysing "phenomena discovered in the data" was found to be most helpful in the conceptualisation of voicing categories that involved close reading and continual reflecting. This proved to be difficult initially as there were overlapping categories where the clause appeared to have more than one content especially with regard to phenomena like desire, mercy, devotional service and shelter and the use of vocatives. The most straight-forward meanings were to do with veneration and glorification.

Answers to Research Question 3 also involved the explication of voicing relations and voicing categories in singular and multiple relations in system networks (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Singular relations means that the clause encodes only a single relation and multiple relations means that the clause encodes more than one voicing relation.

Phase 1, Research Question 4: How can voicing relations be related to the notion of voices and heteroglossia based on a Bakhtinian framework?

For the purposes of the current study, the presence or absence of Bakhtin's heteroglossia (or intertextuality) is interpreted in terms of whether a voicing category designated clauses from different hymns, meaning that there is intertextuality across the data.

Phase 2, Research Question 5: What descriptions and interpretations can be offered from a linguistic and theological perspective?

Phase 2 involved interpretations of the voicing relations and voicing categories following the SFL grammatical analysis of clauses by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) supplemented by Downing and Locke's (2006) and Quirk et al.'s (1985) work. In the study of theme, the hymns

were analysed for experiential themes (marked and unmarked topical themes) and non-experiential themes (textual and interpersonal themes) revealing interpersonal elements such as Vocatives, Mood and Modal Adjuncts in the hymns. Further, a study of transitivity revealed contrasts between process types and participant functions in various circumstances. Since the study of themes revealed some aspects of mood in relation to interpersonal themes, only an analysis of speech function and use of mood and modal adjuncts were carried out. Phase 2 also involved a discussion of theological underpinnings deriving from Vedic Vaishnavism.

Discussion and Findings

Research Question 1: How Are Voicing Relations to Be Identified?

Voicing relations are first identified through the use of the following pronouns:

- first-person personal pronoun, I, in the subjective case,
- first-person singular pronoun, me, in the objective (oblique) case,
- second-person personal pronoun, you,
- possessive determiners, my, your, their,
- third-person singular personal pronouns, he, she and the variants, him, they,
- impersonal singular pronoun, one and the deictic, this,

Research Question 2: What Are the Types of Voicing Relation?

Integrating closely the Bakhtinian notion that “meanings are always generated through interaction between self and other, whether or not the other is real or imaginary” and that “meanings are generated from the relation between self and other rather than by self alone” (Hynes, 2014, p. 73) with findings obtained from Research Question 1 resulted in the explication of three meaningful types of voicing relation, as given below:

1. Self is the focus:
 - The first-person personal pronoun to denote Self, the worshipper in relation to Other, Tulasi, the object of worship and
 - Self, the worshipper in relation to Other, Radha Krsna¹
2. Tulasi is the focus:
 - Other, Tulasi in relation to Self, the worshipper and
 - any others (e.g., him, people, one, Krsna)

3. Other is the focus:
 - Other with others (e.g., souls and Krsna)

Although the hymns are to do with Tulasi worship, other voicing relations are also gleaned such as Self, the worshipper in relation to Other and Radha and Krsna.¹

An example is provided below to show the voicing relation where Self is the focus: In the voicing relation, Veneration, the clause “Tulasi, beloved of Krsna, I bow before you again and again” [STK2/1a] encodes two voicing relations:

- Self expressed by the first-person personal pronoun “I” and
- Other, Tulasi, expressed by the second-person personal pronoun “you”.

The use of the first-person personal pronoun “I” and the second-person personal pronoun “you” demonstrates participant involvement in the discourse.

Research Question 3: How Are Voicing Relations Conceptualised?

The findings showed that the conceptualisation of voicing relations obtained from Research Questions 1 and 2 could be placed under eight voicing categories: Veneration, Yearning, Self-Abnegation, Conceding, Forbearance, Injunction, Exegesis and Glorification. Table 3 illustrates these categories with their respective clause examples. The meanings of the voicing categories are provided in relation to research question 5.

Research Question 4: How Can Voicing Relations Be Related to the Notion of Voices and Heteroglossia Based on a Bakhtinian Framework?

Findings contributing directly to dialogic meanings in the hymns were clauses related to the categories of Veneration, Yearning, Self-Abnegation, Conceding, Forbearance and Exegesis. Findings found not contributing directly to dialogic meanings in the hymns

¹Radha and Krsna are two persons and sometimes they are placed in juxtaposition, Radha Krsna or in hyphenated form Radha-Krsna. They are sometimes referred to collectively as one in most Vedic Vaishnavism hymns and especially in Tulasi hymns. In Vedic theology, usually, the consort of the Lord is mentioned together with the Lord. In this case Radha is the consort of Krsna. When referred to collectively, the female divinity is mentioned first as in Radha Krsna where Radha is the epithet for Krsna. The hymns pay homage to them together because they are a Divine couple.

were clauses related to the notion of Glorification and Injunction. For Glorification, the thematised second-person personal pronoun “you” denoting attribution and identification and for Injunction, the thematised abstract pronoun “a person who” denoting proclamations were considered not to be engaging explicitly with the Self. Their dialogic voice is less prominent compared to the rest of the categories.

For this study, heteroglossia or intertextuality across the data was taken to mean the same voicing relation distributed across the other Tulasi hymns and do not all come from the same hymn. Each hymn has its own set of sentence codes, hence, it can be easily seen from which hymn the sentences come. The voicing categories of Veneration, Self-Abnegation, Conceding, Forbearance, Injunction and Glorification displayed the notion of heteroglossia (or intertextuality) on the grounds that they were distributed across the hymns. It was found that the voicing categories of Yearning and Exegesis designated clauses from the same hymn respectively, rendering them not manifesting the notion of heteroglossia as defined above for this study.

There were a total of 33 clauses (orthographic units) in the hymns. Of this, 23 clauses (68.696%) reflected voicing relations with heteroglossia and 10 (30.303%) were voicing relations without heteroglossia.

Table 4 provides an overview of the types of voicing relation, focus and categories.

Singular relationship clauses refer to clauses in a singular relationship and multiple relationship clauses refer to clauses with more than one relationship. Voicing in singular relationships where Self is the focus is Self and Tulasi, which forms the majority, totalling nine occurrences, and Self and Radha Krsna, totalling two occurrences. Voicing in singular relationship where Tulasi is the focus is Tulasi and Self, Tulasi and “him”, Tulasi and people, Tulasi and one, Tulasi and the grooves, Tulasi and Lord Krsna, all presenting in one occurrence each. Voicing in singular relationships where Other is the focus is “whoever” and Tulasi and “they” and Tulasi, also presenting one occurrence each.

Voicing in multiple relationships was also found in three clauses, with one occurrence each: 1. Self as the focus: Self and Lord Kesava and Self and Tulasi; 2. Vrnda devi (Tulasi) as the focus: Vrnda devi (Tulasi) and Lord Krsna; Vrnda devi (Tulasi) and Radha and Krsna; and 3. Souls the focus: Tulasi devi and souls; Souls and Krishna. The overall findings are captured in Figure 2.

Research Question 5: What Descriptions and Interpretations Can Be Offered from a Linguistic Perspective Supplemented with Vedic Vaishnavism Theological Insights?

Selected examples of clauses from Table 3 are used to offer linguistic interpretations following Halliday’s goal of understanding the relationship between situational and linguistic features. The linguistic interpretations are supplemented with theological insights from Vedic Vaishnavism.

Although the hymn contains a number of grammatical choices that contribute to the total meaning, several emerge “as creating patterns that resonate strongly with the context of the occasion” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 63), in this case the context of voicing relations. The voicing category of Veneration carries the meaning of holding something in high esteem or honour, as shown in Examples 1, 2 and 3 where Self, encoded by the personal pronoun, I, serves the role of actor (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 76) to offer Veneration to the Other, Tulasi (1 to 3):

1. I offer my repeated obeisances unto Vrnda, Srimati Tulasi Devi, who is very dear to Lord Kesava. [STP1/1]
2. Tulasi, beloved of Krsna, I bow before you again and again. [STK2/1a]
3. Vrnda, I bow to your lotus feet. [SVA4/1c]

In Examples 1, 2 and 3 above, the verbs “offer” and “bow” serve as processes in material clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 65). Offering obeisance designates an act of expressing deep respect, that of touching the head to the ground in Vedic Vaishnavism, Hinduism and in most Eastern religious traditions (Swami, 2004). All three clauses have in common the second obligatory participant as prepositional phrases, “unto Vrnda, Srimati Tulasi Devi”, “before you again and again” and “to your lotus feet” functioning as Recipient (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 236) of the action.

In Vedic Vaishnavism, men are expected to make full prostration and women, semi-prostration. The act of prostration, a form of deferential respect, a way of humbly and respectfully conceding to the greatness of another such as God, parents, teachers and elders is found not only in Vaishnavism and Hinduism, but also in other religions of the East. The auspiciousness of Tulasi worship demonstrated in the examples cited above reinforces one of the fundamental aspects of Gaudiya Vaishnavism philosophy, the veneration of Tulasi, as it is believed that by mere association with Tulasi, one is on

Table 3: Summary of Findings Showing Eight Categories of Voicing Relations: Veneration, Yearning, Self-Abnegation, Conceding, Forbearance, Injunction, Exegesis and Glorification with Their Respective Clause Examples Corresponding to Heteroglossia (or Intertextuality) Across the Hymns

Voicing Categories	Encoding of Pronoun	Voicing Relations	Heteroglossia or Intertextuality Across the Hymns
Veneration	Encoded by the first-person singular pronoun “I”	Self and Tulasi – 3 1. I offer my repeated obeisances unto Vrnda, Srimati Tulasi Devi, who is very dear to Lord Kesava. [STP1/1] 2. Tulasi, beloved of Krsna, I bow before you again and again. [STK2/1a] 3. Vrnda, I bow to your lotus feet. [SVA4/1c]	Present (Clauses from different hymns)
Yearning	Encoded by first-person possessive pronoun “my”, first-person singular pronoun “I”, first-person pronoun “me” in oblique case	Self and Tulasi – 3 4. My desire is that you will also grant me a residence in the pleasure groves of Sri Vrndavana-dhama. [STK2/3a] 5. I beg you to make me a follower of the cowherd damsels of Vraja. [STK2/4a] 6. Please give me the privilege of devotional service and make me your own maidservant. [STK2/4b] Self and Radha and Krsna – 2 7. My desire is to obtain the service of Sri Sri ² Radha-Krsna. [STK2/1b] 8. Thus, within my vision I will always behold the beautiful pastimes of Radha and Krsna. [STK2/3b]	Absent (Clauses from the same hymn)
Self-abnegation	Encoded by first-person singular pronoun “I” and the deictic determiner “this”	Self and Tulasi – 3 9. O merciful one, I have no devotion and have committed millions of offenses. [SVA4/8a] 10. I am drowning in the turbulent ocean of lust. [SVA4/8b] 11. This very fallen and lowly servant of Krsna prays, “May I always swim in the love of Sri Radha and Govinda.” [STK2/5]	Present (Clauses from different hymns)
Conceding	Encoded by first-person singular pronoun “I” and the relative pronoun, “whoever”	Self and Tulasi – 1 12. Thus I take shelter of you. [SVA4/8c] Whoever and Tulasi – 1 13. Whoever takes shelter of you has his wishes fulfilled. [STK2/2a]	Present (Clauses from different hymns)
Forbearance	Encoded by first-person pronoun, “me” in oblique case, second-person personal pronoun “you” and second-person possessive pronoun “your”	Tulasi and Self – 1 14. Please bestow your mercy upon me.” [PTD/3] Tulasi and him – 1 15. Bestowing your mercy on him, you make him a resident of Vrndavana. [STK2/2b] Tulasi and people – 1 16. By your mercy people attain residence in Vrndavana, the desire to serve your master’s lotus feet, and the desire to assist in the <i>rasa</i> ³ dance. [SVA4/6]	Present (Clauses from different hymns)
Injunction	Encoded by first-person singular pronoun “I”, abstract pronoun “one” and second-person possessive pronoun “your”	Self and Lord Kesava and Self and Tulasi – 1 17. Now in order to worship Lord Kesava I am collecting your leaves and <i>manjaris</i> . ⁴ [PTD/2] Tulasi and “one” – 1 18. By the circumambulation of Srimati Tulasi Devi all the sins [that one may have committed] are destroyed at every step, even the sin of killing a <i>brahmana</i> . ⁵ [STPM3/1] Tulasi and the groves – 1 19. By Your order the groves where Madhava enjoys pastimes are splendidly decorated with blossoming flowers, bumble-bees, deer, honey, and other things. [SVA4/4]	Present (Clauses from different hymns)
Exegesis		Vrnda devi (Tulasi) and Lord Krsna; Vrnda devi (Tulasi) and Radha and Krsna – 1 20. Vrnda devi is a pure devotee of Lord Krsna and is responsible for setting up the wonderful pastimes of Radha and Krsna in Vrndavana. [STPM3/2] Tulasi devi and souls; Souls and Krishna – 1 21. She exists as Tulasi to benefit the fallen conditioned souls by bestowing devotional service to Krsna. [STPM3/3]	Absent (Clauses from the same hymn)
Glorification	Encoded by second-person personal pronoun “you”, second-person possessive “your” and third-person personal pronoun “they”	Tulasi and Lord Krsna – 1 22. O goddess, you bestow devotional service to Lord Krsna and possess the highest truth. [STP1/2] They and Tulasi – 1 23. They who are learned in the <i>Satvata-tantra</i> ⁶ glorify you. [SVA4/7a]	Present (Clauses from different hymns)

²The use of the double Sri as an honorific refers to two persons Radha and Krsna. It is customary to use the double honorific to refer to the two persons whose names are written in succession, in this case Radha Krsna. Radha and Krsna are known as the Divine Couple. They are also known as the God and the Goddess.

³*Rasa* dance refers to dancing with loving feelings and emotions for the Divine. The *rasa* dance or *raslila* dance takes place in Vrndavan where Krsna’s girlfriends dance with him in ecstatic love.

⁴*Manjaris* refer to the new flower-bearing branches of the Tulasi plant. Tulasi leaves and *manjaris* are used as an offering to Krsna.

⁵*Brahmana* refers to the priest class of men or the intellectuals who impart spiritual wisdom. In Vedic culture duties are performed according to social divisions or *varnas*.

⁶*Satvata-tantra* refers to a book or literature in Sanskrit outlining devotional service and religious ceremonies in Vedic culture.

Table 4: An Overview of Types of Voicing Relation, Focus and Categories

Type of Relation	Voice Focus	Voicing Relations	Voicing Categories	
Singular relationship	Self	Self and Tulasi	Veneration, Yearning, Self-Abnegation, Conceding, Forbearance, Injunction, Exegesis	
		Self and Radha and Krsna	Yearning	
		Self and Tulasi	Forbearance	
	Tulasi	Tulasi and "him"	Forbearance	
		Tulasi and people	Forbearance	
		Tulasi and "one"	Injunction	
		Tulasi and the groves	Injunction	
		Tulasi and Lord Krsna	Glorification	
		Other	Whoever and Tulasi (reverse order)	Conceding
			They and Tulasi (reverse order)	Glorification
Multiple relationships	Self	Self and Lord Kesava and Self and Tulasi	Injunction	
		Vrnda devi (Tulasi)	Exegesis	
	Other	Vrnda devi (Tulasi) and Lord Krsna Vrnda devi (Tulasi) and Radha and Krsna	Exegesis	
		Tulasi devi and souls; Souls and Krishna	Exegesis	

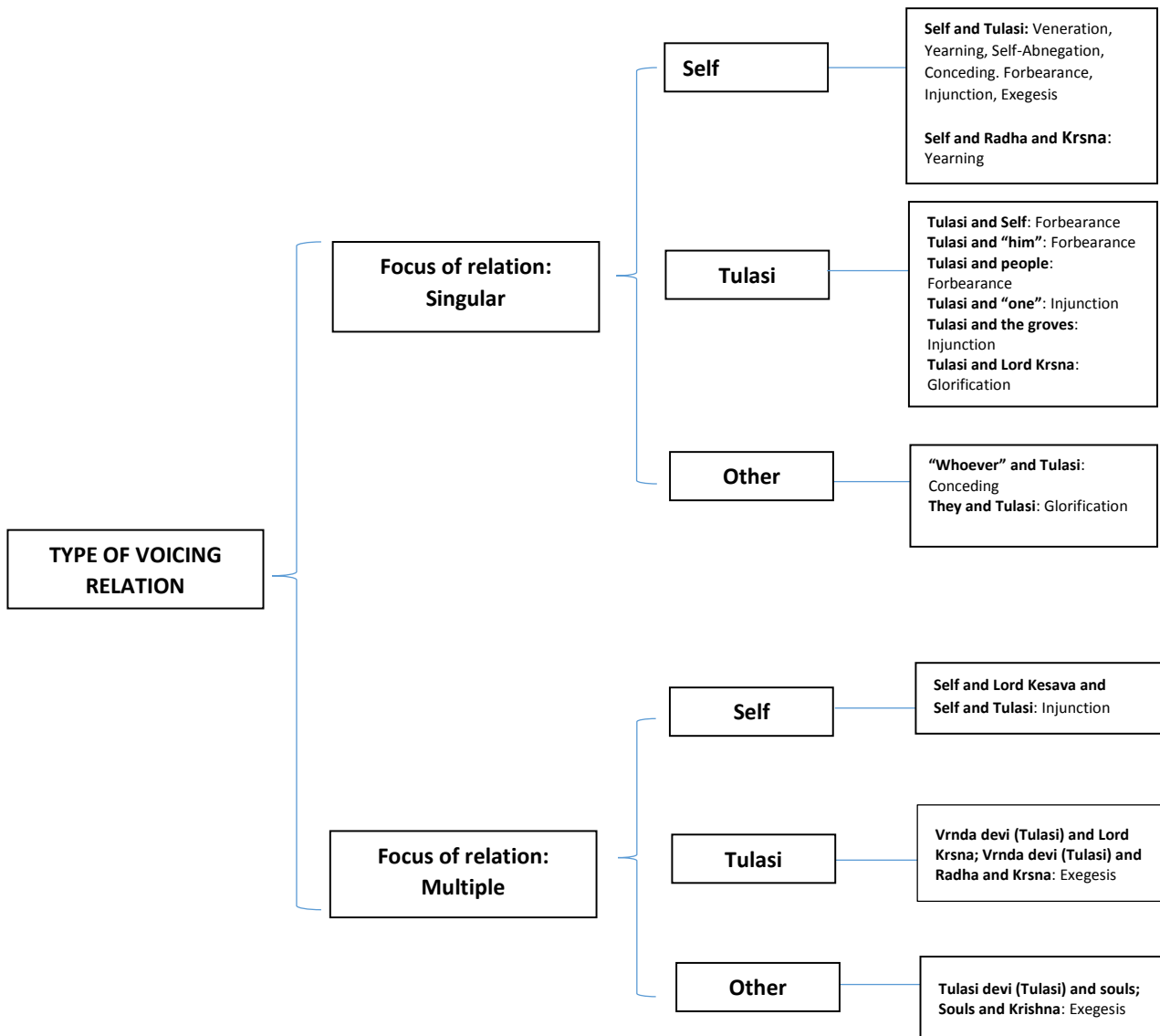


Figure 2: Singular and Multiple Voicing Relations in Tulasi Hymns Together with the Distribution of Voicing Categories

the pathway to “liberation in the form of pure devotional service” (Svāmī, 2011, p. 10). No orthodox worship of Vishnu or Krsna is complete without the worship of Tulasi (Svāmī, 2011).

One striking feature of veneration is the invocation of a reverential attitude towards the object of worship overtly achieved through the use of the Interpersonal resource of vocatives, thematically positioned, to show Tulasi’s exalted position in Gaudiya Vaishnavism and subtly achieved through the use of certain lexical items shown in Examples 2 and 3, while both Examples 2 and 3 respectively show the act of veneration through the use of vocatives. Example 2 shows the expansion of vocatives, such as “O Tulasi” to include a favourably used epithet, “beloved of Krsna”, whereas Example 3 shows vocatives as “standard appellatives, without modification”, such as “O Vranda” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 774).

The voicing category of Yearning carries the meaning of hankering after and longing for someone or something. The voicing category of Yearning in relation to Self is divided into Self and Other, Tulasi (4 to 6) and Self and Other, Radha and Krsna (7 to 8):

4. My desire is that you will also grant me a residence in the pleasure groves of Sri Vrndavana-dhama. [STK2/3a]
5. I beg you to make me a follower of the cowherd damsels of Vraja. [STK2/4a]
6. Please give me the privilege of devotional service and make me your own maidservant. [STK2/4b]
7. My desire is to obtain the service of Sri Sri Radha-Krsna. [STK2/1b]
8. Thus, within my vision I will always behold the beautiful pastimes of Radha and Krsna. [STK2/3b]

Examples 4 to 8 are prayers asking to be granted a number of favours concerning persons (Radha and Krsna) and places (e.g. Sri Vrndavana-dhama). In Examples 4 to 6, the Self implores Tulasi to carry out the action with the use of “directives” (Downing & Locke, p. 178), such as “I beg you” and “please give me” to express yearning for devotional service, but Examples 7 and 8 are declarations or disclosures of the Self’s thoughts. Compared with the use of “please” in Example 6, the use of the “marked imperative,” (Downing & Locke, p. 178) “I beg you to” in Example 5 creates an even more forceful “illocutionary force” or “illocutionary act” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 831) of imploring.

The explicit use of the topical theme “my desire” is found in Examples 4 and 7. They are also relational clauses

having the token “my desire”, which are predicated by the values realised by the non-finite clause “to obtain the service of Sri Sri Radha-Krsna” and the embedded nominal clause, “that you will also grant me a residence in the pleasure groves of Sri Vrndavana-dhama”, to express the Self’s yearnings (Downing & Locke, 2006, p. 226).

A framework for understanding the voicing category of yearning comes from the Bhagavad Gita, which states that one can understand Krishna “only by devotional service”, and entrance into the kingdom of God (Krishna) is attained by having “full consciousness” of Krishna and being “righteous in performing devotional service” (Swami, 2004, p. 363). Therefore, attachment to Krishna is paramount, and “a devotee is fulfilled only through devotional service” (Goswami & Schweig, 2012, p. 170). Such “devotional service in love of God” (Goswami & Schweig, 2012, p. 170) is the ultimate goal of *bhakti* (devotion).

The voicing category of Self-Abnegation in this context concerns sacrifice and renunciation of Self, the worshipper and any approval and appreciation as well as shows helplessness, as shown below (9 to 11):

9. O merciful one, I have no devotion and have committed millions of offenses. [SVA4/8a]
10. I am drowning in the turbulent ocean of lust. [SVA4/8b]
11. This very fallen and lowly servant of Krsna prays, “May I always swim in the love of Sri Radha and Govinda.” [STK2/5]

In example 9, acceding to Tulasi as a merciful person, the use of the verb “have” in a relational process and the verb “committed” in a material process declares the Self being devoid of devotion and having committed millions of offences in an expression of disavowal.

Disavowal is also expressed in Examples 10 and 11 by the use of the ideational metaphors of “drowning” and “swim”. The use of the “low modal finite”, “may”, denoting “possibility”, (Downing & Locke, 2006, p. 392) and the “mood adjunct”, “always” denoting “usuality”, further reinforces the feeling of helplessness (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 109).

Other than the desire of obtaining devotional service, Example 11 also uses a “deictic phrase” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 374) expressing humility, where the deictic item “this” refers to none other than Self. Instead of using the first-person subject pronoun “I”, an attribute is provided of Self in that Self is “very fallen” and a “lowly servant of Krsna”. The identity of the referent is provided by

the “situational reference” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 374) or context itself without difficulty. “I” and “This very fallen and lowly servant of Krsna” are “co-referential” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 347) and the appropriate antecedent can be recovered from the content of the verse itself.

In Gaudiya Vaishnavism, following the teachings of Lord Caitanya, one is expected to be “tolerant of all difficulties”, “worship in a humble state of mind” (Swami, 1988, p. 198) and take shelter or be under the protection or surrender to a Supreme Being, for it is believed that “no one can attain a revolution in consciousness without engaging in devotional service to the Lord” (Swami, 1988, p. 167). Aspirants on the spiritual path of bhakti (devotion) are expected to be in the mood of complete self-surrender and are advised not to become “proud and entangled in material thought” (Swami, 2004, p. 362). Devotees are constantly reminded “not to become materialists, bereft of the transcendental Lord’s service” (Swami, 2004, p. 363.) and to “follow the footsteps of the associates of The Supreme Lord” (Swami, 1988, p. 334). Self, in clauses 9 to 11 above, “positioned” as submissive, is to be understood in relation to “the flux and flow of conversational dialogue and the context in which it is embedded” (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2014, p. 19).

The voicing category of conceding in this context means accepting or surrendering to Tulasi. Krishna’s dearest servant and devotee, the goddess Tulasi is invoked for her protective presence in this verse with the use of a conditional clause, “whoever takes shelter of you” in Example 12 to express the conditions under which one is able to have one’s wishes fulfilled:

12. Whoever takes shelter of you has his wishes fulfilled. [STK2/2a]

Again, insights from the Bhagavad Gita can be used to understand the voicing category of conceding. The precept that material life is temporary and is the cause of perpetual misery is significant in relation to the worshipper taking shelter from the object of worship or “being in a relationship of dependence” (Valpey, 2018, p. 118) upon it, in this case, upon Tulasi. Hence, the soul in the human form of life is able to enquire about the Truths higher than itself and become self-realised, freeing itself from the cycle of birth and death. Also, it is Rupa Goswami’s (a Vaishnava saint from Vrindavan in the 16th century) contention that “one who takes complete refuge in Lord Hari (Lord Krishna) is absolved of all offenses” (Goswami & Schweig, 2012, p. 193) and “progresses gradually towards the path of bhakti (devotion)” (Siddhi-lallasa Dasi, 2008, p. 82).

The voicing category of Forbearance in Example 13 means fortitude and endurance on the part of Self, who is asking for mercy from Tulasi, as seen here:

13. Please bestow your mercy upon me. [PTD/3]

As in clause 13, the use of the “directive” (Downing & Locke, p. 178) “please” is used to express the bequest of mercy.

A focal point for concentration regarding devotional service in Gaudiya Vaishnavism is that “the living entities can receive more mercy by associating with devotees than from trying to associate directly with the Lord” (Swami, 2004, p. 362). The “devotee” in question here is the goddess Tulasi, for she is considered one of Lord Krsna’s greatest devotees. Aspirants on the path of this tradition of worship (Gaudiya Vaishnavism) “serve Krsna by serving Tulasi” (Dasi, March/April 2006, p. 21).

The voicing category of Injunction refers to mandates or instructions for the worship of Tulasi:

14. Now in order to worship Lord Kesava I am collecting your leaves and manjaris [new flower-bearing branches of the tulasi plant]. [PTD/2]

The use of two textual themes, the temporal “now” and the condition “in order to” reinforces the notion of the importance of collecting leaves and *manjaris* for the worship of Lord Kesava, for no orthodox worship of Krsna (synonyms: Vishnu or Krsna) is complete without the worship of Tulasi (Svāmī, 2011; Bandhu, 2012; Devi Dasi I., 1994 and Devi Dasi V., 2006,). Additionally, the Tulasi leaf is also placed in the mouth and palms of a deceased person before cremation in Hindu rites (Jain & Kapoor, 2007), signifying the plant’s divine nature in this tradition of worship.

Conclusion

From a theoretical point of view, the current study has undertaken a linguistic analysis supplemented with theological insights to understand the system of language underlying a set of religious hymns by making explicit the “interaction between linguistics and the philosophy of language” (Zou, 2018, p. 367). The use of the Bhaktinian philosophy of recognising the multiplicity of perspectives and voices that represents the reality of language use to understand voicing relations in this study has been most illuminating.

The current study was able to use the Bakhtinian philosophical idea that “every utterance can be conceived of

as half-ours and half-someone else's" (Zou, 2018, p. 368) to identify and then analyse three main voicing relations in the selected hymns centred on the worship of Tulasi. The three voicing relations are: 1. Self is the focus: Self, the worshipper in relation to Other, Tulasi, the object of worship; and Self, the worshipper in relation to Other, Radha Krsna; 2. Tulasi is the focus: Tulasi as Other in relation to Self, the worshipper and any other Others (e.g. him, people, one, Krsna) and 3. Other is the focus: Other with other Others (e.g. souls and Krsna).

The theoretical implication of the current study is a deepened appreciation of interdisciplinary research of this nature that interweaves language and religion. The current study shows the discourse structures of the hymns pointing towards a particular ideology namely, that "inert material form" is perceived as "divine and therefore venerable" (Valpey, 2018, p. 224). In this case Tulasi worship is built around the notions of Veneration, Yearning, Self-Abnegation, Conceding, Forbearance, Injunction, Exegesis and Glorification, which are all referred to as voicing categories in this study. These voicing categories were drawn from the voicing relations of the hymns. Hymns are significant in worship due to their nature of repeating content, and it is this repetitive quality that is believed to aid in reinforcing faith and belief and developing piety.

The practical implication of the current study is that it provides an opportunity to explore and appreciate the various linguistic resources used in the expressions of voicing relations with regard to Tulasi in the English retold Sanskrit/Bengali hymns. The discourse of Tulasi spiritual hymns has also been seen in relation to other forms of worship such as the chanting of holy names of god, the reading of sacred texts or scripture such as the Bhagavad Gita, the acts of temple worship, the visiting of holy places of pilgrimage, day-to-day practice of Vedic Vaishnavism and other religious activities (Rosen, 2002).

In the past five decades since A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896–1977), Vedic scholar and Spiritual Master, first started the mystical culture of bhakti (devotion) (Rosen, 2002, p. 32) of the Hare Krsna movement or ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) following the teachings of Sri Caitanya in 1965 in the secular locale of New York in the United States, there has been growing interest in Vedic scriptures among its adherents. From a theological point of view, for most non-native speakers of the Sanskrit/Bengali speech community who are adherents of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, an understanding of the hymns is contingent on the English retold versions. The linguistic findings from this study further facilitate an

understanding of Tulasi worship in the "culture specific" prayer occasions of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, especially for those who "[leave] one religious community for another" and have to "learn a new kind of behavior", in this case, Tulasi worship (Samarin, 1987, p. 89).

Outside a religious context, from a standpoint of psychology, Kavar (2015, p. 698) investigated spirituality "as it relates to an understanding of self" for those who have a value for spirituality over an extended period of time. Kavar rightly argued that there is a lack of research into spirituality and an understanding of the concept of the Self of the worshipper. Kavar's (2015, p. 701) research allowed interviewed participants to define spirituality in their own individual ways as the research was not confined to the notion of spirituality from a particular religious belief, but to "the participant's understanding of spirituality as related to the sense of self, relationships, connections with a wider community, and personal growth and transformation". Further research may take this lead and look alternatively at an investigation of practitioners. Research from a practitioner's perspective may reveal how worshippers envisage their own worship, understanding, "thoughts, perceptions, feelings, concerns, assertions and experiences" (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012, p. 34) of spirituality. Another point of interest is how practitioners understand their religious practices through sacred texts and the role that English translations play. Hence, support can be sought from a textual analysis of the kind undertaken in this study.

Competing Interest Statement

The author has read and approved the manuscript and takes full responsibility for its contents. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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